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THE ANIMAL'S MAGNA CHARTA

In Ethnic History and in Ethical Truth

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IN ETHNIC HISTORY AND IN ETHICAL TRUTH

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BY

EDWARD P. BUFFET

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THE ANIMAL'S MAGNA CHARTA

In Ethnic History and in Ethical Truth

WE have reason to shudder at sight of a weapon of war, to feel a thrill of anguish at every cartridge or suggestion of the ammunition trade. But while the European war lasted four years, the war upon dumb creatures is renewed every year. If it were a matter of instant deaths we might deplore the loss of man to society and rejoice in the escape of the animal from further ills. In a large proportion of cases, however, it means painful wounds which do not soon kill. The man's sufferings are relieved by every assuagement, the beast is left to wander off into the woods in lonely misery, the broken-winged fowl sees his migrant companions fly away, leaving him to starve. And all for what? For a few cents of profit, or for sport.

"If man was what he ought to be," wrote Amiel, "he would be adored by the animals, of whom he is too often the capricious and sanguinary tyrant. The legend of Saint Francis of Assisi is not so legendary as we think; and it is not so certain

that it was the beasts who attacked man first. . . . But to exaggerate nothing, let us leave on one side the beasts of prey, the carnivora, and those that live by rapine and slaughter. How many other species are there, by thousands and tens of thousands, who ask peace from us and with whom we persist in waging a brutal war? Our race is by far the most destructive, the most hurtful, and the most formidable, of all the species of the planet. It has invented for its own use the right of the strongest—a divine right which quiets its conscience in the face of the conquered and the oppressed; we have outlawed all that lives except ourselves. Revolting and manifest abuse; notorious and contemptible breach of the law of justice! The bad faith and hypocrisy of it are renewed on a small scale by all successful usurpers. We are always making God our accomplice, that so we may legalize our own iniquities. Every successful massacre is consecrated by a Te Deum."

These words pierce close to the heart of the matter. Amiel might have added that cruelty to animals and to men follows a vicious circle; the war which consummates our mistreatment of the dumb races makes us in turn more contemptuous of mercy toward them.

Worse than the gun is the steel-trap with its powerful toothed jaws, which catches the beast by the leg and holds it like

the thumb-screw or boot of the judicial "question," until the trapper makes his semi-weekly round and deals it a *coup de grace*. Of the animals entrapped, estimated at 200,000,000 yearly, many are found with a leg missing, which was gnawed off to free the captive on some former occasion. Every hardware store contains a bunch of these traps. Every woman who wears a fur garment clothes herself with the agonies of many unfortunate creatures. The use of birds' plumage on hats is trivial in comparison. The mouse-trap often bungles its job to similar effect. I remember setting one of the snapping-down kind supposed to cause speedy death, and afterward finding a little creature which had remained there for possibly forty-eight hours, caught by the leg, by that time badly withered. The ordinary round hole-and-loop trap frequently fails to kill its victims. I have known a mouse to be held by a crushing grip on its upper jaw and in this condition to escape when released—to what further destiny one can only fancy.

Of all cowardly philosophies, the worst is that of Descartes, that animals are automata, which do not really feel. In modified form it is very generally followed as an apology for callousness to animal suffering.

Every little beast is a microcosm like ourselves and its affairs are just as real to it as ours are to us. It possesses the rudiments of our every faculty, even the relig-

ious faculty, but its precociousness is of less moment than its capacity for feeling. "Boys," wrote Bion, "stone a frog in sport, but the frog dies in earnest."

The tragic weakness of the animals, and their inability to make known the wants of their precarious lives ought to arouse in us a chivalrous solicitude. Were we to realize the needs of this inarticulate, neglected multitude, we should feel a yearning toward fellowship with them which would impel us to repudiate those snobbish philosophies of life which ignore them. Better to cast in our lot among them in their simplicity than content ourselves with any program of economic justice that fails to care for all life in proportion to its needs.

Of the domestic and the wild animals, each has a peculiar claim upon us. The former we have robbed of its natural environment and means of subsistence. The latter has been outlawed from mercy. An injured dog may arouse some sympathy, but a beast of the wood just as delicately nerved is wounded and abandoned without compunction.

The tame creature may fill an office of mediation between us and the wild one, telling us the latter's sensitive personality and serving as an ever-present reminder. This function especially belongs to the dog, who, as Maeterlinck has pointed out, is the only member of the lower order that

associates with man in the intimacy of real friendship.

To pamper an animal is not altogether frivolous or foolish. It may evince a resolve that at least one exception shall be made to the rule of misery; that one of the species shall lead a life of happiness as nearly perfect as is physically possible. It expresses, perhaps unconsciously, a recognition of the great wrong that has been perpetrated and a desire to make typical reparation. Thus the acts of indulgence may acquire a truly sacramental value. They are an oblation of vicarious kindness.

Some of the foregoing sentiments are implied in the words with which Amiel begins that entry in his diary, the latter portion of which has been already quoted. He remarks:

"I have just picked up on the stairs a little yellowish cat, ugly and pitiable. Now, curled up in a chair by my side, he seems perfectly happy, and as if he wanted nothing more. Far from being wild, nothing will induce him to leave me, and he has followed me from room to room all day. I have nothing at all that is eatable in the house, but what I have I give him—that is to say, a look and a caress—and that seems to be enough for him, at least for the moment. Small animals, small children, young lives—they are all the same as far as the need of protection and gentleness is concerned. . . . People have sometimes

said to me that the weak and feeble creatures are happy with me. Perhaps such a fact has to do with some special gift or beneficent force; but I am no ways proud of it, nor do I look upon it as anything belonging to me, but simply as a natural gift. It seems to me sometimes as though I could woo the birds to build in my beard as they do in the headgear of some cathedral saint! After all, this is the natural state and the true relation of man toward all inferior creatures."

In primitive times mankind lived on intimate terms with the animals, toward whom their conduct was a blend of cruelty and devotion. From the customs of the old religions concerning the beasts, we may learn much to do us good. I here offer a few gleanings from sundry fields.

Among the Egyptians

Anubis, the Egyptian jackal god, was mistaken by the Greeks for a dog, and thus it came about that he entered Rome as such in the borrowed Isis worship. Owing, perhaps, to the same mistake, the Egyptians themselves sometimes mummified dogs, and their corpses are found in the jackal cemetery at Lycopolis. The dog was not, however, usually treated in Egypt as a sacred animal, although he was employed in the chase and received as a domestic companion. It is gratifying to note

a local appreciation of cats, who were revered and allowed a special cemetery at Bubastis. Indeed the Nile country, where zoölatry ran all through the religion, so that the gods were pictured with animal heads, must have been the animal paradise if men lived up to their creeds.

A beautiful nature feeling toward wild beasts is found in the hymns to the Aten and to Ra-Amen, as witness the following passage from the latter:

"Thou art he that did create green herbs for the cattle and fruit-bearing trees for men; who giveth a livelihood to the fishes in the river and the birds under the heaven, who lendeth breath to the creature that is still within the egg and nourisheth the son of the worm; who giveth life to the flies as to the worms and the fleas; he provideth that which the mice have need of in their holes."

In the Berlin Museum is an epitaphed gravestone of a snake. We are reminded that the Buddhist scriptures contain a verse of poetry on love for serpents. And, after all, are their feelings of less importance than those of animals more agreeable to us as associates?

The Contributions of Mazdaism

For a religion which is neither introspective nor uniformly humane, Zoroastrianism carries some very striking marks of

consideration toward animals. The first of the five Gâthas that may have been composed by Zarathushtra himself is the plea of Geus Urvan, the Ox Soul. It complains to the Amesha Spentas (the personified attributes of God) that the kine on earth are receiving no care nor kindness from men. The petition is addressed to Rightness, who acknowledges that they are without a protector, but says that God only knows why. So the case is appealed to Ahura Mazda himself, who for the time being rejects it, explaining that the cattle are only chattels made for the herdsman's use. Repulsed from the Almighty's throne, the suppliants refuse to abandon hope, so they turn to Good Mind, who answers that the divinely appointed protector of the kine is Zarathushtra. Thus to indicate a weak human being is taken for mockery of them. But Zarathushtra raises a fervent prayer to God and His Attributes that he may have strength for his task. Then the satisfied Ox Soul exclaims: "O Lord, now is help ours; we will serve you, Divine Spirits!"

Even if the Ox Soul in this Gâtha symbolizes the oppressed human herdsman, it could not have been chosen as a metaphor without a very pleasant feeling toward the cattle themselves. It embodies, too, a fancy not unlike that of the souls of things in Maeterlinck's "Blue Bird."

By the legalistic portions of the Zend

Avesta, however degenerate from the pure teaching of Zarathushtra, the dog is made a more highly privileged character than perhaps anywhere else in the literature of the world. On the sheep-raising plains of Central Asia his value was appreciated. According to the Vendîdâd, the murder of a dog was heinous equally with that of a man, and the corpse of a dog and a man similarly defiling. Since the dog "watches goods none of which he receives," he is to be cared for and fed on "milk and fat with meat." It is a great offense to give him bones too hard or food too hot. Mother dogs must be tenderly nursed and failure to support puppies is guilty as wilful murder. Dogs that have lost their scent or gone mad are to be "attended to and healed like one of the faithful," though in case of failure of the cure they may be tied up for safety. The estray, though inferior to the house and shepherd's dogs, is respected as a sort of mendicant friar.

There is an old Aryan myth of Yama, or Yima, god of death, with his two dogs, "brown, broad-muzzled, four-eyed," which he despatches into the world daily to scent out those people whose hour has come and fetch them into his presence. As a survival of this idea, the Avesta enjoins that "a yellow dog with four eyes" shall be brought to look upon every corpse in order to drive away the impure demon Nasu, which seeks to occupy it for Angra Mainyu,

that is Satan. The occasional difficulty in finding a yellow dog with four eyes led to a dispensation which permits the use of a white dog with yellow ears.

A Zoroastrian legend tells of a man in hell whose body was experiencing torment, all except his right foot, which was in the bliss of Paradise. In life he had been a king altogether wicked except that, one day, seeing a tethered goat strain for a wisp of hay, he had used that foot to give the morsel a kick within reach of the famished animal.

Animals in Semitic Countries

While Zoroastrianism, as the religion of the Medes and Persians, was racially akin to Hinduism, yet in practical, straightforward character, it was more like the Semitic cults. To the everlasting disgrace of the Semite, however, is the despite in which he has always held the dog.

The non-Semitic Sumerians, primitive inhabitants of Babylonia, had been totemists—animal worshipers—and by them the dog had been held in esteem. But the Semitic Babylonians regarded him with such antipathy as to class him in their prayers with the snake, the scorpion and the demon.

The Jewish Apochryphal book of Tobit affords one famous exception in Semitic literature—that dog which, in Shakes-

peare's phrase, "is always following." When Tobias and his angel companion left his parents for the journey into Media, "the young man's dog went with them." When, from his adventures, he returned with his bride, "the dog went after them." Why are we told this of the dog and no more? But is it not a great deal? And cannot we imagine that faithful follower passing unscathed through all the vicissitudes of travel among the Iranians, so hospitable to his kind? It is doubtful if he would have played his little part in the story had it been a pure Hebrew one without the Persian or other foreign elements which it manifests.

It is perhaps owing to a transferred Semitic prejudice that "dog" is uttered, in our language as an epithet of contempt. We use it without reflecting how false it is to our own better disposition toward this animal.

Nevertheless, from the Tigris to the Mediterranean, honor has always been paid to animals recognized as useful—the cow, the sheep, the camel. Their service was requited with fair dealing. Under the Mosaic law, no muzzle must convert into a cup of Tantalus the corn which the ox was treading.

The habits of wild beasts also have been observed with poetic insight (Job XXXVIII to XLI and Psalm CIV). With keen sympathy Jeremiah depicts their sufferings in

time of drought: "The hind calved in the field and forsook it because there was no grass. And the wild asses did stand in high places, they sniffed up the wind like dragons; their eyes did fail because there was no grass." A beatific age was prefigured when even the brute creation should dwell in peace, when hurt and destruction should be no more. (Isaiah xi, 6-9.) Nor did the imagery of this millennial time overshoot the practical desires of the unpoetic beast himself; and though the animal was taken as a type of humanity, he could not have been so employed without a discerning sympathy. "In that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures. The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan."

There is one primitive Semitic idea which has developed conspicuously in Arabia, and which does not seem to be used as it might by Biblical expositors. This is the *hima* or *haram*, the sacred enclosure. It denotes both a place consecrated to worship and a safe asylum, as does our word "sanctuary." These concepts may underlie both the bound which Moses drew about Mount Sinai and the cities of refuge which his followers established. Anciently, among the Sabeans and other peoples of Southern Arabia, the *hima* was an unroofed circle of stones around an altar. On a much larger scale than a temple area, were the

sacred pastures, where roamed the flocks and herds devoted to religious uses and where no stray intruding animal might be molested. Thus set apart, must have been the flocks of Jethro, priest of Midian, which Moses tended. In Arabian thought, such animals were "the cattle of God." So, in a special sense, the Lord was their Herdsman or Shepherd. Did this impugn the fact that all were His animals? Or can we not from particulars reach the universal?

Should a strange camel or other beast find its way into the *hima*, it came under Divine protection. No one might reclaim it from this asylum nor pluck it out of God's hand. Subject perhaps to religious uses, it was privileged to dwell there through its natural life in peace. Within the *hima*, not even a wild beast might be hunted, though the *haram* which extended for some hours' journey on every side of Mecca did not protect noxious animals. Those which pastured in these sacred enclosures seem sometimes to have been the same which had been manumitted in fulfillment of a vow or as a thank-offering. While they roamed at will, they might be milked by needy travelers, but they were subject to no toil.

India and the Mahâbhârata

Not until we come to India do we encounter a sense of reverence for conscious

life, as such, so keen that it almost overlooks distinctions between one kind and another. This disposition in eastern Asia is commonly attributed to the belief in transmigration, yet H. Fielding Hall ascribes the kindness shown to animals by the Buddhist people of Burma to a simple recognition of their helplessness.

The most bulky epic in the world is perhaps the Mahâbhârata, that narrative of the great war for the throne of Hastinâpura, twelve centuries B. C. between the Pândavas and the Kurus. For the most part it is dreary and puerile reading compared with the Homeric poems, but its last episode I would not exchange for any other in all epic literature, not even for the idyl of Nausicaa in the Odyssey.

After long adventures in recovering the kingdom, which they had gambled away at the beginning, the sons of Pându settled themselves down to enjoy the realm with their brother Yudhishthira on the throne. But the goal of long desire eventually proved unsatisfying, the restless habit was upon them and an ultimate Thule beckoned them to the Unknown. They became like Tennyson's Ulysses, who after his long wanderings to reach his Ithacan home, sailed away again on a final quest,

"It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew."

So bye-and-bye they bade farewell to their hard-won kingdom, and to the people who accompanied them beyond the city gates, setting out upon a pilgrimage to seek the Heaven of Indra, which stands on Mount Meru, the center of the world. There were five brethren, Yudhishthira, Bhîma, the hero Arjuna and the twins. The sixth was Draupadî—who was she? Orthodox Brahmans tax their wits to explain her status with edification, but it need not scandalize us. Her presence in the story is witness that some of it dates back to the time when our grandaunts on the Asiatic highlands were dwelling in naïve and decorous polyandry. And the seventh member of the pilgrim troop was a dog which followed.

They journeyed eastward and southward and northward, skirting the Indian peninsula. They crossed the high mountains and came forth upon the sandy deserts, where weariness and thirst overtook them. First Draupadî's strength failed and her corpse was left behind. Then one after another of the brothers fell until only two of the party remained—Yudhishthira and the dog.

To them in the desert appeared Indra and invited Yudhishthira to his blissful abode. But the pilgrim pointed to his dumb comrade, who should be included in the invitation. This Indra refused, whereupon Yudhishthira resolutely declined to

desert his companion, choosing to remain outside of heaven rather than be guilty of such ingratitude to a faithful follower. Here the story closes for us, since we are not concerned with the anti-climax with which miracle-mongers have smoothed it in order to make a "good ending."

No history that is written in any book is of more tonic value than this one for use in a certain phase of morbid conscientiousness. It encourages to do the kind and generous thing, though technically incorrect, rather than to seek personal sanctity, or salvation, by doing what is accurately moral, but cruel.

Buddhism the Animal Summum Bonum

Among Indian sects the Jains are conspicuous for their indulgent ministry to dumb creatures. But in the religion of Buddha, by which the old Hindu heritage of thought and feeling was purified, rationalized and intensified, the solicitude for animal welfare reaches its finest manifestations. The devotee who performs a kind act may think only of acquiring merit, yet the very recognition that it is meritorious presupposes an exaltation of mercy by his religion, for which there must have been a purer motive.

Buddhism possesses a power of appeal to the heart riven by world anguish, such as no other faith can make, save only the

religion of Jesus, but as that is rarely understood. There is much food for reflection in the philosophical Buddhist identification of ourselves with the totality of conscious life. Could we attain or stoop to such a communion of spirit, our individual troubles would shrink to the vanishing point. We should bear the sorrows of the Cosmos, as on the Cross, not holding ourselves distinct or apart, but integrally molten into that boundless fellowship of suffering.

Even more than in its philosophies, Buddhism has favored animals in its folk tales. The Jâtakas, that wonderful collection of nearly 550 fables, written in Pâli, some of them prehistoric heirlooms of our race, is a treasure-house of sympathetic beast-lore. In many of the stories animals speak and act according to the ethics of refined altruism. There is the tale of the deer by the pool-side, snared by a noose which cuts him to the quick, yet who refrains from crying out in his pain until his fellows have slaked their thirst. In another story, the king has claimed a daily victim from the herd of deer and when the lot which they cast among themselves falls upon a pregnant doe, a royal stag lays his head upon the slayer's block as a substitute for her. We are also told of an elephant hunted by the treachery of a forester whose life he has previously saved, and yet, with the grace of perfect non-

resistance, allowing the hunters to capture him. Later, in his gilded prison, he laments because his blind mother has no longer any one to bring her the sweet wild fruit.

A certain *noblesse oblige* distinguishes the Buddhist spirit toward inferior creatures. We find it in the story of how, when the Master rescued from a flooded river a rat, a snake, a parrot and a prince, and warmed them by a fire in his hut, it was the rat which he comforted first, as being the weakest. We perceive it also in the rather doubtful report of a Burmese mother carefully removing out of doors a scorpion which has just bitten her baby.

Most impressive of all it is to see the religion of mercy toward animals imperially established and at work. This came to pass in the third century B. C., under Asoka, the Buddhist Constantine. According to legend, he had, in his unregenerate days, maintained a torture house to inflict on miserable creatures, human and otherwise, the torments of hell in similitude. His own published edicts express his remorse at his former enjoyment of the chase and the sports of the arena, like his predecessors. But his conversion wrought an effectual cure, and his later inscribed edicts teem with humane provisions.

"His Sacred Majesty," declares Asoka, "desires that all animate beings should

have security, self-control, peace of mind and joyousness." "On two-footed and four-footed beings, on birds and the denizens of the waters, I have conferred various favors—even unto the boon of life." Asoka forbade the burning of chaff and of forests to the destruction of living creatures in them, the caponing of cocks, the casting of living food to other animals. On holy days fish must neither be caught nor sold, horses nor oxen branded. Many species not required for food were totally exempted from slaughter. For his own table, flesh was restricted and finally given up entirely. While meat eating by the people could not be drastically eradicated, nor animal sacrifices by the priests of the old religion absolutely prohibited, he successfully took measures to limit and reduce these practices. His benevolence was not merely restrictive, for we have the record of his celebrated roadside wells, trees, rest houses and curative arrangements for man and beast. For these hospitals or dispensaries he imported and planted medicinal herbs. A most remarkable feature was his establishment of these welfare provisions not merely within his own vast dominions, but in foreign countries, such as Ceylon on the south and the realm of Antiochos, king of Syria and Western Asia.

While in Asoka's charity there was an activity almost occidental, the form char-

acteristic of Indian mood is the passive —*ahimsâ* — not-killing — harmlessness. After all, this may be the more important, for the hideous pages of history teach that worse suffering has been caused by the bad things done than by the good left undone. It is easier to get men to try to do well—in their own way—than to make them cease from evil. This doctrine may be heretical to westernism, but that does not prove its falsity.

One defect must be admitted in the Hindu and Buddhist theory of animal treatment. The right to live they consider paramount, even if it means a life of suffering. So they will let an injured animal linger till it dies rather than put it out of its misery. But domestic animals in India lead an unhappy life generally, which H. Fielding Hall ascribes to the miserable condition of the low-caste natives themselves. He contrasts Burma, which is today a Buddhist country, as India is not, and where animals are treated with great goodnature, even the ownerless dog being well fed. Still, even there he admits the denial of the *coup de grace* as an exception. On their own premises the easterners are logical enough, for they assume that the animal, if interrupted in working out his punitive karma during the present life, would only be transferred to some other, there to continue the process until his sin was expiated.

The Rûru Deer's Sermon on Mercy

Beside the great Pâli collection of Jâtaka tales already mentioned, there is a selected edition called the Jâtaka-Mâlâ containing a Sanskrit version by Arya Sûra, dating from about the beginning of our era. It represents the northern Buddhism, which although in many ways perverted and decadent, carried the ethics of kindness to a marvelous refinement. One of these stories is told about a "Rûru Deer."

This deer, which dwelt in a woodland solitude, saved the life of a man who afterwards betrayed his whereabouts to the king for a reward. As the king was hunting the Rûru he learned for the first time of the depth of this man's perfidy and with indignation turned to shoot him instead of the deer. The beast, however, interceded for the life of his betrayer. This converted the heart of the king, who forthwith brought the Rûru Deer in state to his capital and listened to its words of holy wisdom.

Arya Sûra's moral preface to the tale is as follows:

"To the virtuous no suffering exists but that of others. It is this they cannot bear, not their own suffering."

Here are some extracts from the Rûru Deer's sermon before the king:

"Manifold are the works of the Holy

Law in all its parts, as namely to injure no one and not to steal. Yet this I believe is their summary in brief: *Mercy toward the creatures.*

"If in Mercy toward all creatures men should hold them like themselves or their own family, whose heart would ever cherish the baleful desire for wickedness?

"But the lack of Mercy is to men a cause of great perversity. It corrupteth their minds and words and conduct toward their own family as well as to strangers.

"He therefore who would be righteous, let him cleave to Mercy, wherein is great profit. Mercy begetteth the virtues as a fructifying rain maketh the crops to grow.

"In Mercy is contained the whole of righteousness. What virtue cherished of good men can there be but hath Mercy at its source? Keeping this in mind, strengthen thou thy Mercy toward all people, holding them like thy son, like thyself."

Hearing these words of the Rûru Deer, the king and his people devoted themselves to practising the Law of Righteousness. "*And he granted security to all quadrupeds and birds.*"

Where has ever been heard a clearer exposition of the Gospel maxim that Love is the fulfilling of the Law, and of the Golden Rule?

In carrying out the precepts Arya Sûra himself was more than zealous, if we may

credit tradition. According to one of the Jâtaka stories Buddha in a past life had given his body to feed a hungry tiger, and it is said that Arya Sûra followed his blessed master's example.

Christian Posture Toward the Animal Kingdom

One of the shortcomings of traditional Christianity is the neglect in which it has held animal welfare, an apt illustration being found in the charge made against the Puritans, that they opposed bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectator. The New Testament itself seems deficient in concern for the inferior creatures. Even the recorded words of Christ are unsatisfying. His tenderness for the God-fed raven or falling sparrow, which can feel, loses force by being conjoined to a similar regard for the lilies and grass, which are insensate. In this He reminds us of His closest follower, Saint Francis, whose love for Sister Lark and the other birds was shared with Brother Sun and the inanimate elements.

We must take it that, in respect to animals, Jesus left a blank for us to fill out. We know that He left such gaps for many other problems—drink, slavery, political democracy, pacifism. That He expected such *hiati* to be filled, is implied by His

predictions that His followers would be led into all truth after His death, and that they would do greater works than His. By no means should we assume these greater works to comprise only executive functions; we must allow unlimited scope for exploits of moral and spiritual discovery.

Compensation in the Physical Nature

Whatever be the miseries of existence for animals, they have one compensation —a physical vivacity and ability to find joy in living for the moment, though their circumstances be pitiable and their future may be without hope. It is a physical quality wholly irrational, yet one of the most divine. This spontaneous exuberance of spirit is the same which reaches up through humanity in a scale rapidly dwindling with age and culture. Such an elementary psycho-physical exaltation may be all that there is in the mystical beatific reminiscences of Plato and Wordsworth.

However much this nature-bestowed resiliency may be impaired by experience, ill-health and reflection, its residue is all that saves us from utter despair, if not for ourselves, at least for others. To keep the world's wheels turning, they must be oiled with illusion. Life is based on self-deception and short-sightedness, upon misconception of the near and imperception of the far. Were it not so, there would

be no effort, no progress. Calculation of results disarms courage; estimation of possibilities cripples hope; vision of injustice paralyzes action; insight of realities reverses desire. Life understood becomes life impossible. It may be that this blind enthusiasm has incited the world to an evil inflation, but in the meanwhile it has proved a benign intoxicant, a merciful anesthetic for sentient beings.

Yet after all, this native joy known to the wild beast and to the young is a blessing often denied to them which dwell among mankind. To many of these broken-spirited creatures that we see in slavery or destitution the moments of exaltation must be rare indeed.

The Deeper Grounds of Our Humane Duties

Our present theories of life are based on petty notions about the values of the "lower" orders. Discoveries in science call for a revision so drastic that as yet we cannot find our true bearings. I can here only suggest a few disturbing problems which would need volumes for their discussion. Especially, our glimpses of the upgrowth of life on earth through vast ages offer to the humane mind three topics on which to ponder:

(1) That pity grounded in the brotherhood of all creatures which the Orientals

learned through their belief in Transmigration may be fostered in us by the teachings of Evolution. A "Universal Kinship" Moore has termed it. This concedes something to the narrowness of our emotions, to our partiality, since a pure good will would go out equally to all, were they brethren or aliens. Yet owing to the limitations of our sympathy, it is a helpful point of view.

(2) The laws of Evolution are non-moral and cruel; they cause both good and evil. Only with reserve must we seek in them for ethical guidance. As man attains to moral consciousness there works in him a higher law, often contrary to that of Nature. I here refrain from judging the question whether this law is itself a part of Evolution. However that may be, we are practically called upon to ally ourselves with a subtle Power in the universe which works for good by seeming to violate the laws of Nature. In this rebellion I believe that the main principle which we should follow is pity, compassion, sympathy.

(3) The present habits of thought in Christendom were formed when it was believed that animals had existed on earth less than a week longer than men; hence there was no problem of their previous suffering. The ages of vital development are now understood to be so long that the sum of human pains and pleasures on

earth cannot be counted as more than a drop in the bucket compared with the total experienced by the lower animals or by the races in form of man which had not yet reached a moral consciousness. Why this is so we cannot tell. To think about it is perilous. But if it unsettle our opinions, it may so arouse our sympathies as to do more good than harm.

Now let me try to state the simple truths underlying all our duty:

The essence of all good is kindness.

The essence of all wrong is cruelty.

As I read history I look upon the second aspect as the greater, although in this judgment few may concur.

These rules virtually state the Christian law of Love.

There remains to point out a firm ground for altruism. This has caused no end of trouble to ethical reasoners, yet seems to me axiomatic, its very simplicity obscuring it. A pain is just as bad a thing in the world if some other man or animal feels it, rather than you or I. Only the lack of nerve communication makes the difference to us. In so far as we overcome the illusion of self, in so far as we project our minds in sympathy, we rise above the personal distinction. Whoever once grasps this direct, although evasive, truth should have no future trouble in believing that the reason for altruism is absolute.

This I understand to be essentially

Henry Sidgwick's axiom of "Rational Benevolence." It is a theory underlying The Golden Rule. And indeed, is it not all implied in that popular aphorism, "Put yourself in his place?"

Never before has it been harder than now to account for the animal suffering in the universe, but never before has our duty in regard to it been more clear and imperative.

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